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NOTES OF THE MONTH.

A HAPPY New Year to all our readers. May it be a year of earnest worship and fruitful work in our churches, and of peace and contentment in our homes.

It is satisfactory to be able to announce that the Re-organisation Scheme is making headway, and a good deal is likely to be heard of it in the early part of 1909. Slower progress has been shown than was anticipated at first, but we may hope that the final result will be all the more satisfactory on that account. Numerous questions of detail have been discussed with great care, and the final draft of the new Code is ready for the approval of the churches. We understand that it has been submitted already to the different Presbyteries and to a meeting of the Remonstrant Synod specially convened for the purpose.

It is a great opportunity for union and for the strength which comes to each through the co-operation of all. May we venture to remind all our congregations of the immense importance of their decision, and of the spirit of unselfish loyalty to the common good which should animate the discussion of the whole subject. This spirit will prevent any undue emphasis of small points of difference, and save us from the disaster of divisions, which are based on personal performances and not on matters of vital principle. At this solemn moment in our history it is well that we should all pray for unity, peace and concord, and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

One of the most interesting events of the past month has been the visit of Sir Robert Hart to Belfast and other parts of the province. The welcome to him culminated in the banquet held in his honour in Queen's College on Thursday, December 4th. It was a notable occasion, and those who were present are not likely to forget his speech, full of charming reminiscences of his own college days, and of the ripe wisdom and broad human sympathies which he has learned in the school of life.

The next day Sir Robert Hart presided as one of the vice-chancellors over the first meeting of the Senate of the Queen's University of Belfast. Whatever sharp divisions of feeling there

may have been during the passage of Mr. Birrell's Irish Universities' Bill through Parliament, we have now to accept facts as they are and to make the best use of them in the interests of education. The influence of our churches must be given as strongly as ever to the unsectarian side. The new University of Belfast must never be allowed to forget that it will be false to its charter and to its present public professions if it ever allows itself to be swayed by sectional religious influences or gives denominational privileges to any party, however strong. We want freedom of teaching and learning, and the best man in every post without any regard to theological opinions or sectarian labels.

We are glad to give a cordial welcome to a small book on a great subject. We refer to Dr. Mellone's "Laws of Life," which has just been issued by the Sunday School Association, London. It is intended, he tells us, to provide a simple introduction to the elements of Ethics; in other words, its aim is to give an elementary account of the foundation and meaning of the chief moral laws of life. Evidently the teachers and elder scholars in our Sunday Schools have been kept specially in view, and the simple language in which it is written and its numerous apt illustrations, make it very suitable for the purpose.

Of course, on this as on every other subject, which touches life very closely, there is room for some difference of opinion. Dr. Mellone thinks his own thoughts and expresses them clearly, and he is anxious to stimulate thought in his readers upon our daily conduct and habits, in regard to which many of us are content to take far too much for granted. There are chapters on "True Self-Regard *versus* Selfishness," "Sympathy," "Self-Control and Moral Freedom," and "Work and Play," which will help to set many of our personal problems and duties in a new light. But we are glad to notice that "Patriotism and Public Work" and "Social Justice" also come in for their share of attention. As we should expect there is a background of religion to the whole book, and it closes on the religious note with a chapter on "The Great Plan," in which we are led to see that in all our good actions we are taking some share in the Divine act of creation, and contributing to a purpose vaster and more beautiful than we can grasp. Copies may be ordered at the Depository, Rosemary Street, and we hope that the orders will be both speedy and numerous. The price is only 1s. net.

WORK AND PLAY.

By Rev. S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.Sc.

IV.

IF there is any truth in what has been already said, it follows that the compulsion to work is not an evil, still less a "curse," inflicted on humanity.

The great law of work, for us, is expressed in the ancient phrase *noblesse oblige*, once the proud boast of knighthood and chivalry; which in its reference to our modern life we may translate *ability is obligation*. You are under the strictest obligation to do for the world what you can. What it is, will depend partly upon health, natural ability, and other things about which you had little or no choice; but none the less, some gift, some talent, is yours which marks out something in the world given you to do.

There are real *hardships of labour*; but they do not make labour only a necessary evil. All of us who have any kind of work to do, feel them. They form three connected groups of facts. Perhaps it will do us good to look them in the face, and to think about them as well as merely feel them.

First: Different kinds of work are not all of the same value to the world. Human desire creates market-value. If there is a thing which nobody wants, it has no value. If many want it, it has value; but if it is limited in supply, its market-value rises; if there is a great deal of it, its value falls.

Second: All men are not by nature fitted to do all kinds of work; there is a natural and inevitable inequality in the abilities of men and hence in the work they can do. Sir Isaac Newton and his gardener were both examples of useful workmen; yet what a difference between them! No one else could have done Newton's work, which has been of immense practical value to the world; but thousands of men could have done the gardener's work. The poorest and most mechanical kind of work, requiring the least of brains, is perfectly indispensable—it must be done: such is the work of the dock-labourer, for instance. Such work is the worst paid. Why? Because for one man who can do the better kind of work there are a hundred or a thousand who can do the poorer kind.

Third: All kinds of work do not develop the higher human qualities of the man. Constant and unchanging handwork, monotonous and mechanical, tends to deaden the man's mental powers and make him like a brainless machine.

One among the many evil results of these things is, that many men do not even have the chance of doing the work that they are fitted for and would love to do. They have to spend their lives in task-work along unchosen lines.

We cannot escape the consequences of all these facts that I have mentioned. But that is no reason why we should make their consequences worse by our own follies. And the greatest folly of all is to allow ourselves to sink down into the belief that all the hardships of our lot are the fault of other men and of circumstances, and that we are helpless victims. That is just what no man, simply because he is a man, ever can be. Even if all the world is against him, there is something, however little, that he can do to make his lot more endurable than it is.

All that I have said confirms the judgment which we expressed before. He who does not recognise the law of labour that binds him to his fellows and makes it part of the first moral duty of his life to do something to uplift and help, fails to fulfil the first condition of an honest life.

The worst example of such a failure is the life of the man or woman who goes through the world simply looking for something in the way of enjoyment, with no thought for anything but to find means of amusement in that so-called "Society" which is only another name for a life of nothing but play. What is the difference between such a one and the "loafer" who lounges round the public-house corner hoping to be asked in by some one to have a drink?

Severe, however, as our judgment must be upon a life which is all play, it is the simple truth that the play-principle has a deep foundation in the real needs of our life. To play, as we hinted before, is to do something just for the pleasure we feel in doing it; and the true play-principle is that of recreation—creating over again, making good again, enlivening or building up something that has suffered damage or exhaustion.

Play is found throughout all nature; through the whole of animal life, and even in the inanimate world, in the beauty of the earth, the source of the joy that has no other purpose but just to be felt. And play is one of our "instincts," one of the things which come "naturally" to us to do without thinking of any reason why we do them.

In a concluding article we must try to face some of the plain questions which arise out of the position of "play" in modern life.

Said that shrewd observer and deeply-read historian, Canon Hensley Henson, in a recent sermon:—"Here at home, where society staggers beneath the accumulating weight of ancient wrongs and modern problems; abroad, in wide reaches of our Empire, where life is empty of hallowed memories; in the vast populations of Asia and Africa, where the familiar pilot-stars of ancestral religion are fading from the sky, and no fresh illuminations come from the accustomed shrines;—everywhere are

men asking for the Bread of Life. Never before did the human spirit confess more clearly its desire for Christ."

LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

[In connection with the Scheme of Systematic Instruction for the Sunday Schools of the Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Association, 1908-9.]

VI.

[CONTINUED]

By REV. H. J. ROSSINGTON, M.A., B.D.

Fourth Passage (Isaiah lii.–liii.)

S the above is the most important of our special passages, and indeed one of the greatest general significance, it should be carefully read with the aid of a good commentary. Many of its individual phrases are very familiar, especially to those who know "The Messiah" music well. But this very familiarity may be responsible for misunderstanding if the whole of the passage be not read in the light of what has been said of the other "Servant of Yahweh" passages. In these latter, several leading ideas have been noted, and these must still be understood and applied: (1) The Servant, statements about whom bring into the closest relationship the four passages we are considering—has been thought of hitherto as the nation of Israel. (2) Owing to the fact that this Servant is the special concern of Yahweh, and is sometimes spoken of by the latter as "My Servant," he is known as "The Servant of Yahweh." (3) The service for which Yahweh has prepared him, and to which he is specially called, is the proclamation of the religion of Yahweh throughout the world. The Servant is to be a missionary to the heathen nations. Now in addition to these three great ideas a fourth came into prominence in our last lesson, viz.: the idea that the Servant of Yahweh would not accomplish his divine task without considerable suffering. But if that was suggested in our last lesson, in our present passage it is amplified and illustrated at greater length. Thus the main thought can be brought under this heading:—

The Suffering Servant of Yahweh.

In the opening verse (*Is. lii.* 13) the expression "My Servant" forms a connecting link with what has been already said. First of all, however, we are informed as to the result of the work before the suffering it entails upon the Servant is emphasised. Yahweh is the speaker, and he makes known the glorious future in store for one whom men had deemed an object of pity and contempt. That which seems debased is to be exalted. His work is to prosper in such a way as to influence many nations and to strike kings dumb with astonishment. This, in brief, is the argument in *Is. lii.* 13-15, and it forms a brief introduction to chapter liii. Let as now turn to the latter and try to understand its great significance. We have at the very outset a difficulty to overcome, viz.: to determine the speaker or speakers in the first verse:—"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" It is usually supposed that the prophet is the speaker, and that he is drawing attention to the very surprising story of the Servant's sufferings which he is about to tell. The story indicates not merely the measure of the sufferings but their quite unmerited character, so far as the Servant is concerned. He has to bear the burden of the sins of others, to feel oppression and undergo misfortune without mitigation or limit, while those who really deserved them escape unpunished. Not even the extreme penalty, death, is to pass him by. Great and inexpressible afflictions are to be followed by an ignominious death and a dishonoured grave. Moreover, while the righteous Servant must know that this terrible fate is undeserved, he suffers without a single cry of complaint. "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth" (*Is. liii.* 7). Yet that is not to be the end. The humiliating death is to be succeeded by a glorious resurrection (*Is. liii.* 10–12). This story of unexampled suffering is

dependent upon the first verse—it is the report there referred to by the speaker or speakers as being so remarkable as to be almost incredible. There is no difficulty in the ordinary view that the prophet is the speaker, but it is far more satisfactory to conclude with some scholars that the speakers are referred to in the preceding part of the passage (*Is. lii.* 15). We are told in the latter that the exaltation of the Servant has had a remarkable effect upon many nations and kings. What more natural than that they should proceed to speak of the effect upon themselves and to mention the cause of their astonishment? They have seen a thing so marvellous as to be almost incomprehensible to themselves. That which they despised because of its mean appearance and its abject and seemingly purposeless misery has been honoured and greatly exalted. No wonder that they say with perfect fitness: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Then follows the substance of that which they have heard—the report of the Servant's sufferings, death, and resurrection, contained in the following ten verses of the chapter, the last verse being Yahweh's announcement of what he has in store for his righteous Servant If, therefore, we thus understand the nations and kings of lii. 15 to be the speakers in liii., except in verse 12, where Yahweh is the speaker, the sequence of thought is easily understood and has been well summarised in these words: "'Who would have believed that which we have heard? but to whom has Yahweh's working been revealed?" The meaning is that the heathen nations have heard the wonderful news of the Servant's exaltation, and their first thought is, who could ever have believed that this high destiny was reserved for him? They then go on to excuse their blindness to his true character. He was like a dwarfed and sickly plant with no beauty or promise, like a leper cursed by God. Then they proceed to confess that the curse which they thought rested upon him, was really the punishment for their own sin. In this way we get a perfectly connected line of thought. These deep truths are not strange on the lips of the nations, for it is not the nations in their heathen blindness who are speaking, but the nations who have witnessed the exaltation of the Servant and have come to recognise Yahweh as the true God."

But how does this apply to the Servant as the prophet understands him? Is this story of great and unmerited suffering at all true of Israel, if, as we have reason to believe, the Second Isaiah always means the nation of Israel when he speaks of the Servant of Yahweh? Let us recall the fact, emphasised in one of our first lessons, that the prophet is uttering his prophecies at the time of the Exile, and just when the latter is reaching its close. Hence, it is easy and natural to suppose that it is pre-eminently of the Exile and of Israel's sufferings therein that he is thinking. But were those sufferings unmerited? Are we not led to believe in other prophecies that the Exile came upon Israel as a consequence of her sins? Yes, it is quite true that this latter aspect is again and again emphasised. But it is equally true that the Second Isaiah thinks of the Exile and the sufferings it brings upon Israel as something more than merited afflictions. In one striking passage he says that Israel "Hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." But why is this excessive suffering brought upon Israel? Because Israel stands in a special relation to the Lord and has a divine mission to perform which embraces within its scope all the nations of the world. It is in the light of this mission that the prophet understands the Exile and all that it entailed. It is a terrible ordeal through which the nation had to pass to bring to fruition the providential plan. It is no more passive experience, the result of former activities, it points forward to a glorious consummation. The sufferings, the ignominious death, the dishonoured grave, which fall to the Servant of Yahweh—all these the prophet sees

reflected in the experience of Israel in the Exile. But why dwell upon or be dismayed by these? Already events are happening which are to bring about the glorious resurrection. The troops of Cyrus proceed from victory to victory. Soon Israel will be restored and raised to greater honour. Yet not Israel alone. Her sufferings have not been in vain. By her stripes others have been healed. The salvation made known to her by faithful prophets, and rendered doubly precious and impressive by that period of keen affliction, will now realise its possibilities in such a way as to amaze all who formerly held aloof or scorned those who suffered on its behalf. They too will acknowledge Yahweh as their God, and thus will appear the great religious consummation when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Obituary.

MISS ATKINSON.

The members of Larne and Kilwaughter Congregation are mourning, as are members of others, the departure from this life of a lady honoured for her father's and mother's sake; and still more honoured and beloved for her own sterling worth and most valuable services rendered to her church and to the community in general. In her earlier years Miss Atkinson was a most untiring worker in Sunday School and Choir, and in all the benevolent institutions of the congregation which her father, Miles Atkinson, served faithfully for many years as elder and secretary. And possibly no institution secured her more zealous advocacy than the Orphan Society in connection with the Non-Subscribing Church. But those interests, and more that might be named, were but a fraction of her life work. Her services to the poor of Larne and neighbourhood of all denominations, through clothing and coal funds, the Nursing Society, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, as well as her help and friendly sympathy given direct in the homes of the poor, and, indeed, in the homes of the well-to-do, are known in their entirety to Him only from whom nothing is hidden, and who even in this world meted out reward in blessing her with a cheerful, happy, and contented life, troops of friends, and kind and affectionate attendants that gathered in loving assiduity around her death-bed.

Fitting reference was made from the pulpit to Miss Atkinson's worth and services in a spirit not altogether devoid of sorrow, but of which the prevailing note was one of pardonable joy and thanksgiving for a life so faithful, so loving, and so abundant in the fruits of righteousness, which closed in this world on November 24th.

The interment took place in the M'Garel Cemetery on November 26th, Rev. James Kennedy officiating.

MR. HERBERT DARBISHIRE.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Herbert Darbishire, which took place at his residence, St. Margaret's, Windsor Park, on 21st December. He had been in failing health for some months past, but only during the last ten days had been confined to his room. Mr. Darbishire was born at Greenheys, Manchester, in 1830, and came to Belfast at the early age of 17. He was at first connected with the linen trade, but later in life adopted the profession of stockbroker, in partnership with Mr. G. B. Browne. He married a daughter of the late Rev. William Bruce, of the Farm, Belfast, who with two daughters survives him. Fifteen years ago he lost his son Herbert Dukinfield Darbishire, a rising philologist and a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and this was a great grief to him. He took little active part in public life. He was a staunch Unionist and member of the Ulster Reform Club. He was largely instrumental in the founding of the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (Queen Street), of which he was the first hon. secretary. The family have always been connected with the Unitarians, and belong to the First Presbyterian Congregation, Rosemary Street.

A REMINISCENCE OF VERE FOSTER.

By J. Vinycomb, M.R.I.A.

"He had the spirit of the true and gentle knight. He knew how to do great things quite simply. He was full of high-bred chivalry towards the ignorant and the poor. He gave everything to them, and it made him happy to take Poverty as his bride for the good of men. . . . The age of the heroes and the Saints is not only in the past."—*Rev. W. H. Drummond, B.A., 23rd Dec.*, 1900.

THE story of how Mr. Vere Foster became identified with the social history of the country can hardly be told in a brief article. A few of the leading facts connected with his career by one who knew him intimately, and admired his noble sincerity and unselfishness, may be of interest to a new generation to whom he is now but a name: how in a time of great national distress and famine he left the distinguished position which he occupied and came himself into a position far more honourable, that of working for the famishing poor, the ignorant, and the neglected; following in the footsteps of the great Master himself "who went about continually doing good."

Vere Henry Louis Foster was born at Copenhagen, 25th April, 1819, and died at Belfast, 21st December, 1900. He was the third son of the Right Hon. Sir Augustus John Foster, Bart., P.C., G.C.B., and of Albinia-Jane, daughter of the Hon. George Vere Hobart, second son of George, 3rd Earl of Buckinghamshire. Educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. Entered the diplomatic service 1842–1847, in which latter year he retired, and for over half a century he devoted his entire energies and fortune in the cause of education and emigration as a means towards the amelioration of Irish distress and the betterment of the people.

In a lecture delivered on January 28th, 1879, under the auspices of the Rosemary Street Mutual Improvement Association, Mr. Foster gave some personal reminiscences leading up to the subject of his lecture, "Incidents of Travel in America." He said: "The last diplomatic mission with which I was connected in South America having been suspended in 1847, and the Irish Famine occurring at the same time, I determined to retire from the diplomatic service and to take up my residence in Ireland, in the hope of making myself useful by falling in with any practical scheme for giving increased employment to the people and for preventing against a recurrence of similar destitution in the future; considering that it was as natural and desirable for young people to emigrate as for young bees to swarm. I soon became interested in the subject of emigration. I first travelled throughout the United States and Canada to ascertain the prospects of emigrants, and afterwards sent out numerous parties, varying from 20 to 150 at a time, chiefly at my own expense and partly by means of subscriptions from relations and friends. I went to America at least once every year, sometimes twice, and often as a steerage passenger in order that I might know how to provide for and direct others, and on each occasion I visited most of the emigrants whom I had sent out and made arrangements for the location of others." He graphically described the miserable accommodation at that time afforded steerage passengers and the cruel treatment by the mates, whom he described as a set of brutes, and with others suffered many rude indignities at their hands; how he spent most of his time in caring

for and protecting those under his charge, preparing soda bread, and waiting his turn at the cookhouse. On one of these voyages besides the ill-treatment, he suffered from dysentery, and " thought if the voyage had lasted two days longer, he would have been off the roll." As it was, he did not recover from the effects of the voyage for several years. Returning to England, his diary of the voyage was printed by order of the House of Commons, and by his evidence given before a Commission of the House was largely responsible for the passing of more beneficient emigration laws for the protection and comfort of the passengers. In the course of education Mr. Foster was no less indefatigable. In an interesting volume entitled " New Ireland," by A. M. Sullivan, M.P., he tells the story of a man walking through the length and breadth of Ireland, with his knapsack upon his shoulders, visiting nearly every schoolhouse throughout the entire country, observing the miserable hovels in which the children were gathered—the thatched roof, which in wet weather allowed the rain to form puddles on the bare earthen floor, and the poor condition of the schoolhouses generally. These visible signs of neglect so impressed Mr. Foster that he determined to find a remedy. Out of his own private purse he supplied to each of the schools in Ireland that sought his aid, a new wooden floor and a new slate roof. Such magnificent philanthropy is unexampled. Added to that catalogue, what Mr. Foster more than any other man in the Empire had done for the improvement of the education of the people in the initiatory steps of teaching them how to read and write—to write especially—has earned the lasting gratitude of his fellow countrymen.

Viscount Palmerston when Prime Minister frequently by speeches and by letter called attention to fundamental errors in the prevailing systems of penmanship. Mr. Foster determined in the year 1864 to carry out his various suggestions with a view of fitting Irish boys and girls for remunerative employment in clerkships and otherwise, holding truly that a legible style of handwriting afforded a key to many employments. He therefore first studied all the most popular systems of penmanship with a view of culling the excellencies of each, besides consulting numbers of successful teachers. The use of his books was sanctioned by the National Board, and in consequence of many years' previous correspondence with nearly all the managers and teachers either on the subject of assisted emigration or the improvement of schoolhouses, the success was immediate: the demand became so great that in 35 days the National Board sold more of them than they had sold of their previous publication of headlines on separate cardboard slips during the preceding thirty-five years.

" The Vere Foster Writing Copy Books " were at first printed by various firms in Dublin and elsewhere, but finally the firm of Marcus Ward & Co. secured the entire series being printed at the Royal Ulster Works, the average annual sale of the books amounting to nearly four millions.

The sale of the writing copy books having become general in England, Mr. Foster was encouraged to undertake the publication of *Drawing* copy books—a practical knowledge of drawing being essential to proficiency in many trades and professions. For these also a large demand was created, and to their use many thousands of men and women owe their rise and success in life. A man who could do such great things quietly and unobtrusively to his life's end, has done real service to the community in which he lived, and all this he did, not as a commercial speculation—for he died poor—but as a thing born in the big heart of a philanthropist, and carried out with the wisdom of a statesman.

During later years Mr. Foster found time to arrange family papers preserved at Glyde Court, Ardee, Co. Louth, the family seat. In 1897 he published " The Two Duchesses," a volume of 497 pages, containing correspondence of, and relating to Georgina, Duchess of

Devonshire (of Gainsborough's stolen picture) and Elizabeth, Duchess of Devonshire, and other of the chief personages of the time—1777–1859. The two Duchesses—the handsomest and brightest women of the period, and the fastest of friends, were successively wives of William, 5th Duke of Devonshire. Elizabeth, the second duchess, grandmother of Vere Foster, was daughter of Harvey, Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry, and widow of John Thomas Foster, M.P., first Baronet.

Mr. Foster was an ardent supporter of the Royal Hospital, Belfast, and gave willing service for a lengthened period towards the maintenance of that institution, while his private benevolence to the poor and deserving was always to him a labour of love.

At the bi-centenary celebration of the Second Congregation (All Souls' Church) 5th October, 1908, Mr. S. Shannon Millin, barrister-at-law, said: "Although Mr. Foster was a member of the Second Congregation, his mind was too broad to be tramelled with the doctrines of any particular sect . . . . He has passed away from our midst, but the name of Vere Foster is to-day enshrined in the hearts of thousands to whom he extended a helping hand in their time of adversity. Truly may we say of him: 'Write me as one who loves his fellowmen.'"

REPORTS.

Belfast—First Church.—A most successful Social Gathering of the congregation was held in the Central Hall on December 9th. Those attending had been asked to bring with them, and wear during the evening, badges or similar objects representing the names of Irish towns. Nearly a hundred persons responded to the request, while other persons were also present, and the result was an interesting and most animated assembly. For over an hour the members made an inspection of each other's badges, many of which were exceedingly well designed and executed. When the names represented were guessed they were written down on cards provided for the purpose, and these at a later stage of the proceedings were collected and checked in order that prizes might be awarded to the most successful competitors. As was fitting in these modern days the ladies were to the fore, and several headed the list. To the first of these—Miss Nellie Laird—a cabinet photo frame was awarded. In order to stimulate the efforts of the sterner sex, and prevent the latter falling too far behind in the race for supremacy, a stylo pocket pen was given to the most successful gentleman, Mr. P. B. Orr. Two prizes were also provided for the lady and gentleman who would have been first had the list been reversed, but since modesty likes to be unnoticed we will not give the names of those who occupied honour's lowly positions. An interval for refreshments and conversation was followed by a short muiscal programme. Miss M'Kisack contributed four songs in a manner that won her most hearty appreciation, while Miss S. Ritchie's three violin solos were also very greatly enjoyed. Miss Jellie was a most efficient accompanist to both the songs and the violin solos.

Domestic Mission, Stanhope Street.—The winter work at the Mission is now in full swing. The Committee has recently appointed Mr. Woolley as missionary for a period of six months, and the attendance at the services and the various other activities are showing already the advantage of regular work after the long period of unsettlement. We may mention that there is an unusual amount of distress this winter among some of the poor families connected with the Mission owing to want of employment. If any reader would like to help, contributions in aid of special cases of suffering and distress may be sent to Miss C. Bruce, the Farm, or to Mr. Woolley at the Mission.

Belfast: All Souls' Church (Resignation).—At Morning Service on Dec. 13th, the Rev. W. H. Drummond announced that he would terminate his ministry in June next upon his appointment as Editor of *The Inquirer* and

Superintendent Minister to the Provincial Assembly of the Non-Subscribing Churches of London and the South-Eastern Counties. Mr. Drummond has been since 1900 minister of All Souls' Church, Belfast, and before that was at Warrington and Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, and the North End Mission in Liverpool. He was a student of Manchester College in London (1881-86), before its removal to Oxford. It was in his last session at college that his father, Dr. James Drummond, succeeded Dr. Martineau as principal. As a Hibbert Scholar, Mr. Drummond had a year's further study in Germany, at the University of Jena, before entering upon the work of the ministry.

Rosemary Hall is proving already a great addition to the social life of the All Souls' Congregation. On December 7th, the Rev. W. H. Drummond lectured to a meeting of the Social Union on "Winter Wanderings in the Mediterranean." He took his hearers along the route through Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily and Italy, which he followed himself last winter, with the help of about 80 slides which had been specially prepared by Miss C. M. Patterson. Some of the pictures illustrating Roman remains in North Africa, scenes in the desert, and the Greek temples of Sicily were much admired. On the following Monday, the annual Christmas Party in connection with the Social Union, was held with great success. There was an unusually large attendance, and a great deal of trouble was taken by the small committee of ladies responsible for the arrangements, to make the evening bright and attractive.

Unity Guild.—The November meeting took place in the Central Hall on Wednesday, the 18th. In view of the approach of the Milton Tercentenary celebrations the evening was gievn up to a lecture by the President (Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D.) entitled: "John Milton: Poet and Puritan," and this was listened to with much interest by a good audience. The lecturer said the life of Milton could be divided into three periods: (1) 1608–1640, the time of education and preparation for his life's work as well as the period of composition of remarkable productions like the "Nativity Ode," "Comus," "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso," and "Lycidas"; (2) 1640–1660: the period of Milton's pamphleteering and public work as Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth; (3) 1660–1674: The closing period of his poetical activities, when, blind and disillusioned by the events of the Restoration, the poet turned to his life task, "Paradise Lost," with its sequel, "Paradise Regained," and "Samson Agonistes." The second period only called for mention in so far as it illustrated Milton's Puritanism. No great poet was ever more fortunate in the formative period of his life than John Milton. A congenial home, a careful education, liberty to follow and foster the bent of his genius—all these were his in fullest measure. It was in the quiet years at Horton that he found his real vocation and dedicated himself thereto with singleness of aim and the most indomitable determination. Thanks to his strenuous application he became the most learned of English poets. Yet even learning was a means to the great end he set himself, and was duly subordinated to the working out of a complete poetic scheme. Along with felicity of phrasing, which made some of his sentences familiar to those who had no knowledge of his works, there went wonderful power of restraint and that constructive ability which has been termed architecture in literature. But in his verse, no less than in his prose, there were perceptible seriousness of purpose, fidelity to great principles, and intense moral and religious feeling, and it was in these rather than in any dislike to the lighter pleasures of life that his Puritanism was displayed. Because of these lofty qualities and because of the great literature in which they found expression he deserved to be remembered and honoured. The lecture was illustrated by selections from

Milton's poems. The Annual Soiree, which is always eagerly anticipated by the members of the Guild, will take place in the Central Hall on January 13th.

Holywood. — On Tuesday evening, December 1st, the members of the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church held their Annual Meeting and Congregational Soiree. Tea was served from seven o'clock till eight, when the chair was taken by Rev. S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.Sc. There was a large attendance, though owing to illness and other unavoidable reasons several families were not represented. The adoption of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts was moved by the Chairman and seconded by Mr. Richard Patterson, J.P., both of whom referred to the fact that it was just ten years since Dr. Mellone settled in Holywood, and they also spoke of the feeling of harmony that prevailed in the congregation. Mr. O. C. Nelson, Hon. Treasurer, spoke of the financial position of the Church, which is at present in a satisfactory condition, and he urged on the young people the necessity of becoming stipend payers in order to keep up the funds. After the election of office-bearers for the ensuing year, and votes of thanks to the various Church-workers, the business part of the meeting was brought to a close. An enjoyable musical programme was provided, the following taking part: Miss M'Cammon, Miss M. Neill, Miss K. Neill and Mr. W. W. Coleman. There was also a part song by the Choir and a vocal quartette by Mrs. S. M'Crum, Miss M. Neill, Mr. W. J. Harvey, and Mr. J. Shannon. Miss Munster kindly acted as accompanist. It may be of interest to note that several of the speakers referred to the benefit the Church had derived from having the "local page" in the *Non-Subscribing Presbyterian*," for it had been the means of letting the congregation know what was going on and also let them know of arrangements for the future. Dr. Mellone said it was a pity that more of the churches did not localize the back page of the paper for he thought it would be to their advantage to do so.

On Monday, December 21st, the members of Miss Patterson's wood-carving class and a few friends spent an enjoyable social evening in honour of the approaching marriage of one of their number, Mr. James Shannon, jun. After tea and a short musical programme the chief event of the evening took place, namely the presentation to Mr. Shannon of a handsome book-case carved by the members of the class and Miss Patterson, and bearing a suitable inscription on a silver plate. Afterwards games and music were enjoyed and the proceedings terminated with the singing of "For he's a jolly good fellow," and three cheers for the bride and groom.

PSALM OF PRAISE.

Praise ye the Lord! In His sanctuary raise
Your heart in its gladness, your voice in His praise.
Give glory to God, by whose wisdom and might
Earth rose up in beauty from fountains of light.

Praise ye the Lord! Let no music be mute:
Yea, praise Him with psaltery and viol and lute;
With trumpet and timbrel give praise to His name,
And high-sounding cymbals His greatness proclaim.

Praise ye the Lord! Let each joy-given thing
Exult in the praise of its Maker and King,
And voices of angels and men shall accord,
Acclaiming in symphony—"Praise ye the Lord."

FREDERIC THOMAS.

Marriage.

DICK—M'ROBERT. — December 4th, at Comber Remonstrant Church, by Rev. John Joseph Magill, B.A., Rademon, Robert Dick, Garry, Ballymoney, to Mary, only daughter of the late Hugh R. M'Robert, Ballynahinch.

Deaths.

DRUMMOND.—On December 14th, at Edinburgh, Margaret Anne Menzies Drummond, wife of Rev. Robert B. Drummond, and mother of Mrs. Mellone, Holywood, in her 67th year.

DARBISHIRE.—At St. Margaret's, Windsor Park, on December 21st, 1908, Herbert Darbishire, in his 79th year.

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Saturdays—10 till 2. **Assist. Secretary—Rev. G. J. SLIPPER.**

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